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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/030,431	01/10/2002	Hermann Uhr	50520	6533

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WASHINGTON, DC 20036

EXAMINER

DANG, THUAN D

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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1764

DATE MAILED: 08/26/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/030,431

Applicant(s)

UHR ET AL.

Examiner

Thuan D. Dang

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 11 June 2003.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-9 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-9 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☒ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

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DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

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Claims 1-7 and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Smith et al (4,358,362) alone or alternatively in view of the prior art admitted by applicants on page 1, lines 36-43.

Smith discloses that **hydrocarbons feeds** containing impurities such as sulfur, oxygen, and nitrogen compounds must be treated in an fixed bed of zeolitic sorbents such as Y zeolite under applicants' claimed conditions of temperature and pressure before the catalytic conversion process that utilizes a zeolite catalyst (the abstract; the figure; col. 3, lines 22-40; col. 4, lines 14-59; col. 5, lines 19-23; col. 15, lines 17-19).

On column, lines 34-65, Smith clearly discloses that the **hydrocarbon feeds** used for preparing ethylbenzene in the alkylation are benzene and ethylene. Although, Smith discloses clearly that benzene is treated in his process, Smith is silent as to also treating ethylene.

However, as discussed above, Smith discloses that **hydrocarbon feeds** must be treated and ethylene is one among two hydrocarbon feeds used for the Smith alkylation.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art who wishes to operate the Smith alkylation process to produce ethylbenzene at the time the invention was made to have modified the Smith process treating any hydrocarbon feeds including aromatics and ethylene by zeolitic sorbent to remove all poisonous impurities to enhance the catalyst activity.

Alternatively, applicants have admitted that industrial ethylene contains impurities such as sulfur and oxygen which have been recognized as poisons to the Smith catalyst (page 2, lines 36-39; Smith: col. 3, lines 37-40). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art who operates the Smith alkylation process to produce ethylbenzene at the time the invention was made to have modified the Smith process by treating the industrial ethylene with

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the Smith sulfur-oxygen zeolitic sorbent before the alkylation so that maintain the lifetime of the catalyst.

Claim 8 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Smith et al (4,358,362) alone or alternatively in view of the prior art admitted by applicants on page 1, lines 36-43, further in view of Chu et al (5,334,795).

Smith does not disclose the phase used for the process (see the entire patent for details). However, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the Smith process by operating under either gas or liquid since Chu discloses that the alkylation process can be operated under liquid/gas phase (col. 9, lines 24 and 25).

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed 6/11/03 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

The argument that the essential disclosure of Smith is a purification process for dewaxing hydrocarbon oils is not persuasive since Smith discloses the reactants fed to also other processes including alkylation of benzene is treated (the abstract; col. 14, line 53-61).

The citation of Ullmann's Encyclopedia of Industrial Chemistry in the argument about physical properties of ethylene is not relevant with the rejection over Smith since Smith discloses treating the feed of aromatic alkylation.

Conclusion

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Thuan D. Dang whose telephone number is 703-305-2658. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Thu.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Glenn Caldarola can be reached on 703-308-6824. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 872-9306.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-0661.

Thuan D. Dang
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1764

